MAZAMAS.

-----00000-----

By Frank
V. V.
Drake.

COPYRIGHT
53754 aa'

33

Copyright, 1895, by Frank V. Drake,

Portland, Oregon,

MAZAMAS.

* * *

--- Summit of Mount Hood, Oregon, July 19, 1894. ---

I

With oft repeated steps and labor long bestowed,
And high resolve, we, faint and worn, have gained these heights supreme
In bold crusade, and halting now on Hood's illumined arch
Seek brief repose for nature's failing powers.
Since early morn no pause, or rest; nor flowers,
Or trees have brought relief to weary hours.
No pathway marked those rigid wastes to guide our toilsome march,
Whilst dread crevasse and icy steeps and sluggish glacier stream
Beset the way to this grand temple of our God.

II

To Thee, Oh King ! instinctive turns each humbled soul,
Its genesis to know, its mission, and its end; to learn
What purpose moved the Will Divine to rear this mighty hill;
Why crown it thus with coronet of snow ?
Why bless with fruitage rich that world below ?
Why curse it all with strife and want and woe ?
Of all thy creatures there doth man alone array his will
In arms against Thy laws, betray and slay his kinsmen born.
'Twas ever thus; Must thus it be while time shall roll ?

III

What sacrifice can these Thy children offer here;
What prayer present, oblation bring unto this holy place
To gain curcease of woe and bear the balm to men below ?
What potent charm may ban man's selfishness,
Or him exalt above base brutishness,
Or prove that Love alone is blessedness ?
Teach us, Oh ; Soul Divine, these priceless, needful things to know,
That we, thus fraught with last and only blessing due our race,
To earth may speed and banish sin, dry ev'ry tear.

IV

Behold ; the North displays yet other monarchs grand,
  Like unto this, and Southward others, priest robed, still do rise,
Best types of strength supreme and beauty past comparison.
    Pacific's rev'rent sea doth wash their feet,
    E'en as of old Devotion oft did greet
    Men sanctified, and render service meet.
In farthest distance deserts trace the Eastern horizon,
  While blended hills and vales and fields and streams and woods comprise--
The nearer world ; and this, all this, our native land!

V

Above these crags, with loyal hearts, we raise the gemmed
  And sun streaked flag, the loved and boasted sign of Freedom's home ;
Ah ; Liberty is only found above all minor heights;
    O'er Noah's mount the rainbow first appeared;
    On Sinai laws sacred first were heard;
    From Olivet Love taught The potent word
Which erstwhile moved the world for Mercy, Justice, and the Right;
  Its echo now men scarce may hear amidst the moil and gloom
Whereto, and wild unrest, alas ! we go again.

VI

All yester eve, at verge of Flora's bright domain,
  Where winter gray young summer meets, on ashen couch we lay,
The azure arch, star decked and vast, our only canopy;
    When Saturn's son arose in eastern skies,
    With him Love's queen; in startled, pleased surprise,
    Fair Venus smiled upon our bold emprise,
Whiles Mercury, attendant there, now hot with jealousy,
  To Jupiter the tidings sped that mortals dared essay
Intrusion where dread Zeus holds his lonely reign.

VII

Olympus' king the message heard: portentous ire
Roused all his ancient energy: responsive to his call
The gods again prepared Jove's awful enginery for war;
Glad cyclops brought the dread artillery,
And Boreas his storm-born cavalry,
Whilst Jupiter his cloud-bred infantry
Did marshal quick from neighbor streams and lakes, and seas afar.
On Cascades' serrate pile he mustered them, as on a wall
High buttressed 'gainst the base of Hood's exalted spire.

VIII

Through gorge and canyon weird and wild, and mountain rent,
Whose deeps profound no earthling e'er may exploration make,
The army of the gods came on, depolying at our feet.
Above the host, displayed with pleasing care,
Were billowed banners spread, now gray, now fair
And white, soft floating on the summer air.
Anon a distant thunder-boom, which echoes scarce repeat;
Another shot, but nearer still, then all the hills did wake,
And moaning woods beshrewed the tempest's dire intent.

IX

By columns moving slow, and files in swift detour,
Their ranks spread o'er the earth, as on a bier a pall is laid;
To us the world was dead, with inky drapings on its tomb.
Like beads of jet on hem of mantle strung
The lava isles on Hood's white robe were hung;
To these our brave crusaders dauntless clung
And noted well the gleam and flash of weapons in the gloom
Beneath, the thunder's voice, the moon's pale corse descending, sad
And slow, to sable shroud and lonely sepulture.

X

Then storming squadrons, upward sent, in fierce disdain
Beset our camp; front, flanks and rear their horsemen charged, recoiled,
Returned, till grime and wrack, high whirling, veiled the startled stars;
Then troops of infantry prolonged the fight
And pelted liquid missiles, thus to fright
Our strange, invading army from its height.
Of gnarled and stunted trees we raised defense; below us far,
And out of range, the Titans shot their thunder bolts and toiled
In vain to move their ordnance up the steep moraine.

XI

We slept. A bugle blast, e're yet 'twas dawn, recalled
The pilgrim horde to toil unwont and their desire supreme:
With Alpen staves well shod, steel spurs upon our feet, and guise
Of soot o'erspread each face --- a sure defense
'Gainst mirrored sun, and beauty's vain pretense
Of merit here -- we bowed in reverence
Before our monarch's royal front, white limned against the skies,
And thus began the march, a broken, fragmentary stream
Of pigmies creeping, snail like, up the slanting wall.

XII

The van, betimes, like fabled sprites in seas of snow,
Had passed volcanoe's seething gulf, their task thus half complete:
Still up along a glacier ridge on path scarce hand-breadth wide,
Their only road, they ventured on in file,
As on the roof of huge cathedral pile ---
One step aside that slippy, narrow trail,
The hapless victim needs must plunge in crater's gape, else glide,
Resistless, to that circled, blue abyss whence, roaring, beat
White river's waves, three thousand feet below.

XIII

And here the gods again assailed our ranks and hurled
Their arctic troops, in legions massed and gallop fierce, to fling
Their frost barbed lances through our shrinking flesh till breath and blood
Stood still. With scud and sleet and hail they strove
To conquer human zeal, then sought to move
The massy heaps of snow from slopes above,
And hurl the threat'ning avalanche, in sudden, whelming flood,
Upon our main array --- a hecatomb and offering
To jealous, demon shapes who rule this upper world,

XIV

Whence Amphitrite's Sole-eyed sons, at forge, contrive
The enginery wherewith to rive and heave the clayey shell
That bounds their drear abode the high extended vents emerge
At crater's edge, in chimney huge and black.
Our laggards there essayed from winds and wrack
To hide; Plutonic vapors drove them back;
Seditious then, they fled in clamorous retreat to verge
Of shelt'ring woods, a crestless, vanquished crew. Our van, the while
Upon the ridge, Mazama's honor dared retrieve.

XV

With scimitar of flame the sun, now rising slow,
Gashed deep the body of the storm -- a horizontal blow --
And poured his glory through the wound. Therein we stood entranced,
'Midst scenes no man e'er dreamed before, or knew:
A canopy of fire, enlaced with blue
And gold and green and tints of opal hue,
Made curtains more than beautiful scarce o'er our heads advanced,
While waves of jasper, crowned with mother-pearl, rolled just below
Our feet, now couched in bed of brilliants all aglow.

XVI

Then gazing out that magic rift the wonders grew
Beyond man's utmost phantasy ; upon the silentearth
That somber vesture lay, now mixing gray and tipped with white,
While Cascade's peaks, like studded jewels, gleam
Upon the pall -- a chain of gems which seems
A range of fountains spouting rainbow beams.
Then, lo ! a specter mountain in the west appeared, in height,
And form similitude of this, its battled peaks and girth
The same, its bulk upreared in Heaven's eternal blue.

XVII

Whence came that phantom hill ? The western skies were pure,
No cloud, or any thing terrestrial, a screen supplied
Whereon a shadow might be cast, the air was clear and chill,
And yet erect that ghostly semblance stood
Scarce five miles hence, and all the while a flood
Of light illumed its crown --- another Hood !
At first a shadow form, it denser, brighter grew, until
It seemed a mountain true, whereon mazamas well might hide
In safe retreat, from hunters' savage wiles secure.

XVIII

Thus while we stood beneath that iris canopy
On glowing pavement dashed with waves up-rolled from pearly bed,
And marvelled of that spirit mount, a shadow came behind
The new-born hill -- a shade on purest blue;
'Twas ill defined at first, but quickly grew
More dark, and soon became distinct to view,
A more prodigious mountain form, a second phantom, lined
In air; and all the while the first remained intact, its head
With splendor crowned, -- then vanished both, like phantasies.

XIX

Above us still that irridescent ceiling burned
In folds of mingled hues more gorgeous than auroral dawn,
With all of terrene gems combined, through many roods displayed:
The flowing nimbus at our feet became
A mottled stream of burnished gold; we fain
Had laved our brows in that celestial flame
And dwelt for aye beside that flood. The Prince of light arrayed
Each mortal form in shining robes --- Elysium had come. !
Alas ! the vision died, the sombrous clouds returned.

XX

The waning storm now circled Hood in slow retreat;
Our lessened ranks still trailed the ridge, till, lo ! a vast crevasse
In ice yet old when man was made, had cut the field in twain;
We filed to left and still scant path pursued
Along the nether shore where caverns, hued
As odean waves, in silent grandure wooed
Ambition's quest. A bridge, by timely snow slide built amain
Across the gulf, supplied to upper slopes a fragile pass;
O'er this we marched with weary limbs and frigid feet.

XXI

One effort more -- a thousand feet -- and victory !
With labored breath and quaking flesh we, silent, turned to view
The conqured field: ah ! wondrous change; that wintry storm was gone!
It vanished as a dream the while we bent
The final struggle here. We, thus intent
Upon the task assumed, were full content
To look upon this goal laone until the prize was won:
We won a prize, a rapture deep, no mortals ever knew,
Lest they, as we, had earned exalted ecstasy.

XXII

Now marshaled here, close grouped, upon this peerless hill,
In summer's noonday glow and wrapped in winter's fierce embrace,
We look upon the flag and note its constellation's gleam
New set among the stars; then join in song :
"Our Country 'tis of thee." The voices, strong
With patriotic zeal and pride, prolong
The throbbing symphony: but weird and strange the measures seem;
Responding to our hymn no echoed answer give us trace
Of sympathy. Ah ! can this bode our country ill ?

XXIII

With freemen torn by factions, ruled by sordid zeal,
With hunger, gaunt and fierce, crouched close by plenty's swollen side
Dire evils breed, as teeth by Cadmus sown, through all our land.
No bees, or ants, or birds, or beasts, but find
In nature better laws, each for their kind,
Than any tribe of men has e'er defined
In books or creeds. Alarmed, oppressed, our loyal people stand
Bewildered in a maze of legislation, while a tide
Of petty partisans o'erwhelms our country's weal.

XXIV

And is it true as cynics warn and fear declares,
That manhood in America hath won its highest plane ?
That none remain in all the land regardful for its good ?
That men no more may look above and see
Yet grander heights as future destiny,
Or hope for Justice, Love or Liberty ?
And must humanity now halt its march on upward road
To turn, despairing, cow'ring, on the downward course again ?
Oh ; God ! attend the early prayer we offered here.

XXV

And grant us Balm Divine to bear below; give light
To guide poor mortals through the gloom that shrouds their weary lives
To happiness and peace, designed for them when time was new.
Alas ! from pulseless deeps attentive ear
Can feel no sound, nor voice, nor answer hear;
Yet, mystic, sacred presence brooding near
Assuages fear, and slow distils its holy essence through
Each votive heart and thus a secret, blest assurance gives
That Light will come, with Mercy, Justice and the Right.

XXVI

Lo ! mark again that pall which yester-night was drawn
Above the earth, where busy Titans hurled their flashy beams
In wrathful impotence, and thundered angrily ; behold
Yon eastern fringe, where viewless forms of air
Now rend the curtain; others still, more near
The glowing mountain peaks, assist and tear
The dusky fabric into fragments; these in turn are rolled
Like ancient parchment books and laid in canyons and ravines;
The sun there burns them quick and all our foes are gone.

XXVII

A light celestial bathes the wakened world; we gaze
For pillared smoke and signal flash and know ten thousand eyes
Are straining now to catch our note of victory attained;
East, North and South the columned signs attest
That anxious friends await, and from the West
Refecled sunbeams glint our mountain's crest.
No answer can we give; each puny throat is taxed in vain
For trumpet tones; the voice falls, wingless, at our feet, and dies
On beds of snow, and all too small this flag we raise.

XXVIII

The Cascades' woody hills their varied colors blend
With others ranked afar and near, and to enchanted eye
They seem as richest broidery engrained in tapestry
Spread o'er the earth. A silver thread appears
Where rolls the ancient Oregon and hears
Its sound of dashings now as when the years
Were young; broad valleys aid the grand design; the dusky gray
Of deserts and the sea a fringe and border fair supply.
On carpet thus displayed this hoary chieftain stands.

XXIX

Erect upon this jutting crag, extended far
Beyond the circled rim of earth, we whirl through boundless space
At comet speed and learn the grandure of Divinity;
Mere atoms on this rock we seem, upthrown
By Time's unmeasured waves; in turn this dome
Eburnean is dwindled and become
A fragile flake of snow; the continent's sublimity
Is swallowed in the sea; this globe itself hath but a place
As grain of dust adrift among the million stars!

XXX

Long ere maternal yearning moved the Orphic dove
To brood o'er primal anarchy in night and solitude,
Or cosmic law gave nebula due form and sphere, or sun
Or orb had place, the pregnant ether bore
Each element whereof this whirling car
Whereon we ride was wrought. Perchance this hour
And scene were then in contemplation held by Him, the One
Intelligence, who into being called this multitude
Of souls assembled here, awed witness to His love.

XXXI

"Tahoma" --- thus the native Indian legends run ---
" A god magnificent and pure of soul, dwelt in a grove
Of giant trees where stands this mountain now. None came to share
His meditations, or his loneliness,
Till form empyreal, of loveliness
And grace and majesty and holiness
Co-equal with his own, swept through the vault --- a goddess fair
On errand from the stars. 'Twas Red Tamahnous, queen of love ;
Tahoma saw, she smiled and passed beyond the sun.

XXXII

Aflame with strange, ecstatic fire the fervent god,
In sleepless vigil, waited through the years for her return --
Ten hundred years: she came at last, at rising of the sun.
Exalting all his form Tahoma rose
To greet his queen: in maidenly repose
She lingered in the west: upon her brows
A wreathed effulgence flamed. In form the lovers were as one,
Their ornaments the same. Each learned that fires celestial burn
Where love is pure. Thus, near opposed, they willing stood.

XXXIII

Foredoomed to earthly home, Tahoma sued her dear
Companionship -- that she, with silver hair untressed and spread
In beauty through the skies, no more from stars to sun should roam,
An errant messenger. She gave consent:
Above the pair a morning halo bent,
The Greater Spirit's token of assent.
With arms outstretched the god essayed to clasp his bride's fair form,
When, lo : behind her rose a grisly shape of aspect dread ;
It veiled her from his sight and bore her through the air.

XXXIV

'Twas Black Tamahnous, fiend of rage and hate, the foe
Of all the good and pure in heaven, on earth; relentless, fierce,
Of form prodigious, aspect foul, she murders joy and hope
Where e're she goes. Transfixed Tahoma stood ;
Then burst his heart; above his head the blood,
In fountain red and hot, poured all its flood,
And thus he died. The Spirit Great bewailed his son and wove
A mantle pure and white around his form, and as the years
Speed past renews the garb, symbolical of woe.

XXXV

And ever as the summer comes the mystic queen,
Forbidden ever to return as comet to the sky,
Steals silently from out the west, at rising of the sun,
To look upon her lover's mantled form,
And meditate, alone, that sweet, sad morn
When first they met; and still the hag, hell born,
Pursues and draws obscuring veil o'er each ; to realms unknown
They thus return. The tale is true, for even mortal eye,
When blest of sight, may yet behold that very scene."

XXXVI

Thus runs the tale of Red Tamahnous, hag and Hood ;
Were those the phantom forms we saw this morn, and were we blessed
With more than mortal vision while we stood in rift of storm ?
Ah ; who shall read that wondrous mystery,
Or ever know how far Time's history,
Unwritten e'en in rocks, may testify
The truth of whispered story and the lore of spirit forms ?
Thus much we know: That once the lava on this mountain's crest
Was red and hot within its breast -- a sea of blood.

XXXVII

Volcanic mass, congealed, we pile in altar broad
  And strong, and gather near to write new page in history;
Mazama's record here begins and hath no parallel.
    Unique our sect: new laws we frame;
    Each rev'rent novice then inscribes his name,
    In solemn teste, upon this roll of fame.
In casket now, with zealous care, we place the sacred scroll
  And this within the altar fix, as in a sacristy,
And consecrate the whole to Thee, Almighty God.

.R3 M2
1888